DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 431 270 EC 307 252

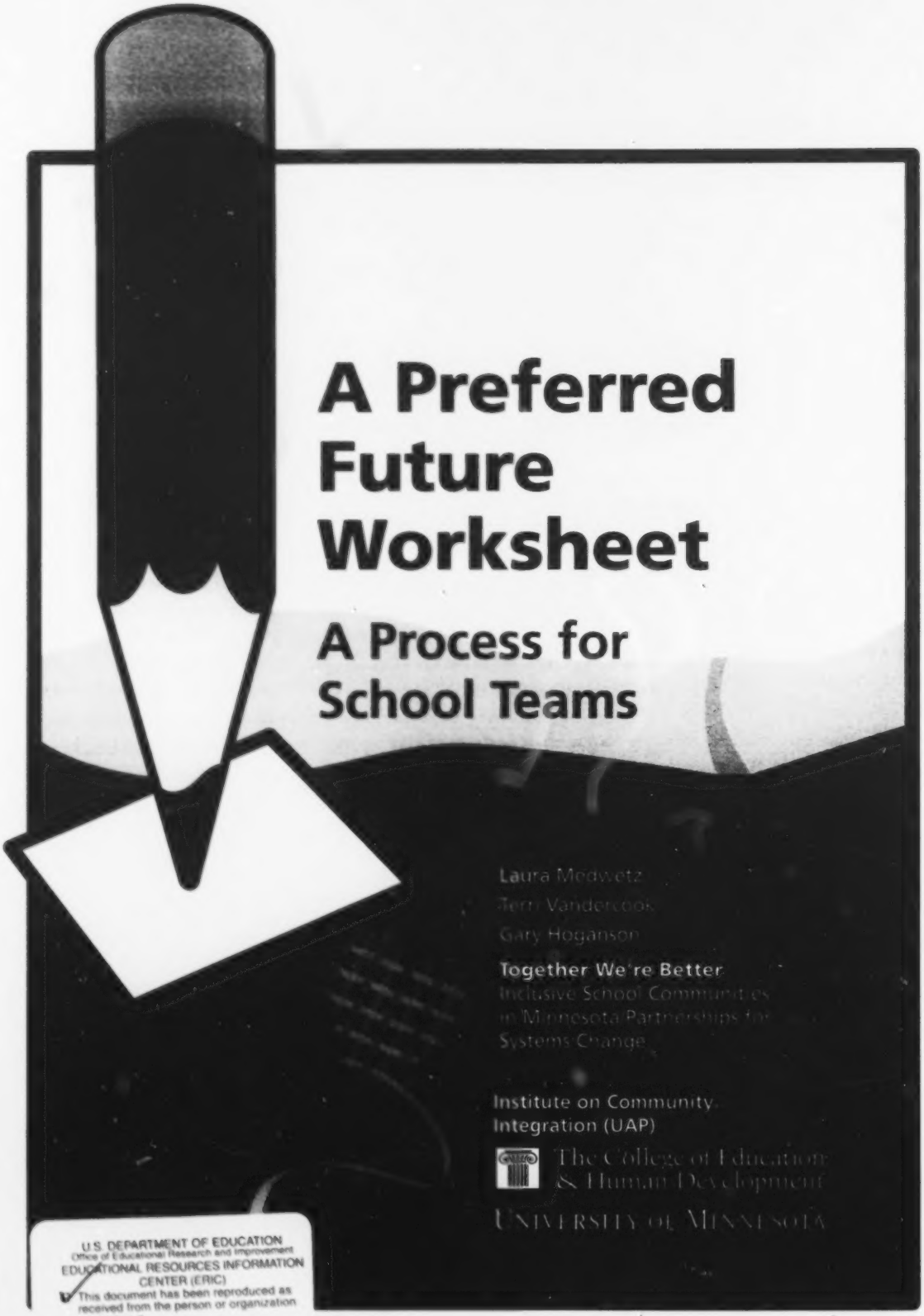
AUTHOR Medwetz, Laura; Vandercook, Terri; Hoganson, Gary
TITLE A Preferred Future Worksheet: A Process for School Teams. Together We're Better [Series].
INSTITUTION Minnesota Univ., Minneapolis. Inst. on Community Integration.; Minnesota State Dept. of Children, Families, and Learning, St. Paul.
SPONS AGENCY Special Education Programs (ED/OSERS), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 1999-01-00
NOTE 13p.
CONTRACT H086J20010
AVAILABLE FROM Publications Office, Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Dr., SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455; Tel: 612-624-4512; Fax: 612-624-9344; Web site: http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/ici/ (available in alternative formats upon request).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Brainstorming; *Decision Making; *Diversity (Student); *Educational Objectives; Elementary Secondary Education; *Goal Orientation; Meetings; *Planning; *Teamwork

ABSTRACT

The Preferred Future Worksheet is a planning tool that can assist school members or teams who are dealing with a school problem or issue. The worksheet has been designed to assist in analyzing the current situation, identifying a preferred future, and then creating a plan of action. Introductory material urges heterogeneous group membership and offers tips for facilitating the "preferred future" process such as: keep the group size under 10 members, assign roles within the group for effective facilitation of the process, and allow sufficient time (such as 2 hours) to complete planning sessions. The six steps of the process are then each briefly described: (1) define concerns and envision a preferred future (10 minutes); (2) identify strengths and barriers (15 minutes); (3) brainstorm strategies (25 minutes); (4) select possible strategies (20 minutes); (5) prioritize strategies (10 minutes); and (6) develop a plan (30-40 minutes). A blank worksheet is provided and followed by a completed sample resulting from a meeting of a group of school staff members to decide how to adapt curriculum/instruction to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student body. (DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 431 270



A Preferred Future Worksheet

A Process for School Teams

Laura Medwetz
Terri Vandercook
Gary Hoganson

Together We're Better
Inclusive School Communities
in Minnesota Partnerships for
Systems Change

Institute on Community Integration (UAP)
The College of Education & Human Development
University of Minnesota

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

EC 307252

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

What is the Preferred Future Worksheet?

The Preferred Future Worksheet is a planning tool that can assist school members or teams who are dealing with a school problem or issue. The worksheet has been designed to assist in analyzing the current situation, identifying a preferred future, and then creating a plan of action.

Who Should Use the Preferred Future Worksheet?

The worksheet can be used by individuals or by small groups. The most effective planning occurs when a variety of school members work together to generate ideas and goals for reaching a preferred future. Anyone within the school community who is interested in analyzing the current situation and taking part in the visioning, action planning, and implementation can be invaluable to the planning team. Consider organizing a planning team to be heterogeneous in nature. In other words, you may want to include school community members who have different roles within the school system. Include individuals who are impacted by the current issue or whose involvement in the planning process is essential in order for change to occur. School community members may include teachers, parents, administrators, related service personnel, non-certified school staff (e.g., bus driver), students, and members of the broader community. Heterogeneous team membership promotes an effective analysis of the current situation as well as an informed picture of the future.

Tips for Facilitating the Preferred Future Process

- Keep the group size under 10 members. A small group size promotes more opportunities for all individuals to contribute to the process.
- Assign roles within the group to assist in effective facilitation of the process. A facilitator should be identified. This person is responsible for moving the group through the process. Two recorders should be assigned. One will record group members' responses in view of the group on poster paper or a chalk board; the other recorder will record responses on the Preferred Future Worksheet. A timekeeper can keep the pace steady to complete the process in a timely fashion.
- Facilitate equal contributions by each group member and discuss group member responses. The facilitator should summarize discussions as a way to check for understanding and consensus from the group.
- Review the example provided. It demonstrates how one team used the process to articulate a preferred future and design a plan to move in that direction.
- Try not to dwell on the issue and challenges that you face. Focus your energy on the future that you want to create. This approach will support the development of creative thinking and empower the planning team to take action.
- The process can take up to two hours. Allow sufficient time in order to complete the process. If necessary, schedule two shorter planning sessions.
- Meet in a comfortable place. Refreshments and breaks may keep members fresh and focused on the task at hand.
- The facilitator should check-in with the group halfway through the process and at the end to verify that the group is feeling good about the work completed thus far and offer any suggestions that would improve the effectiveness of the group work or process. The facilitator can simply ask, "How are we doing?"

The Preferred Future Process

The preferred future process will take approximately two hours. The steps provided below outline the process —

Step 1

Define concerns and envision a preferred future

(10 minutes)

Discuss the specific characteristics of the issue at hand. Identify aspects of the issue by describing how your school is currently affected by the concern. Most importantly, *your group should envision the school when the issues have been resolved.* What does the preferred future look and feel like? You must do this to have a consensus on what you are striving for. Summarize your discussion in a brief written statement. This is your "preferred future."

Step 2

Identify strengths and barriers

(15 minutes)

List strengths in the school community that can help you realize the preferred future identified in Step 1. For example, school community members' attitudes or beliefs, effective practices or strategies, or policies or leadership within the school. Next, list the barriers in the school community that hinder movement toward the desired future. For example, lack of enthusiasm for change, traditions within the school community that thwart progress, or lack of effective staff development/parent training opportunities.

Step 3

Brainstorm strategies

(25 minutes)

Solicit ideas for ways to achieve your vision of a preferred future. List all ideas on a flip chart or blackboard so they are visible to the group. Do not allow members to evaluate any of the ideas. The time for evaluating ideas will come in the next step.

Some helpful hints for brainstorming include —

- Record all responses in front of the group. The viewing of ideas can stimulate creative thinking and generate new ideas.
- Do not evaluate ideas! All ideas are welcome when brainstorming. This promotes a positive group climate and sets the stage for creating new solutions and strategies.
- Use colorful markers and record responses pictorially to stimulate creative right-brain thinking.
- Use a "round robin" format where each member is provided an opportunity to contribute an idea or strategy by taking turns within the group (group members also have the option to pass).
- Split-up the preferred future planning session. For example, for the first session, proceed through Steps 1 and 2. When you reach Step 3, schedule a second session to complete Steps 3-6. Group members are assigned the task of brainstorming ideas individually and bringing those ideas to the next planning session.
- Before beginning a brainstorming session, ask group members to write themselves a reminder sign which reads "Don't Evaluate." Each member then posts their sign in clear view while brainstorming.
- Have fun! Creativity is stimulated during playful times.

Step 4

Select possible strategies

(20 minutes)

Use the checklist format provided on the worksheet to evaluate the ideas formulated in Step 3 and identify those you want to pursue. Is the idea realistic? (Note: Be realistic, but don't be afraid to try something new and take risks. That's the way issues are effectively addressed). Are there resources (e.g., personnel, budget) available to support the idea? Record your evaluations on the worksheet.

Step 5

Prioritize strategies

(10 minutes)

Review the list of possible strategies. Prioritize and finalize the list. The following criteria may be helpful for prioritizing—

- Is there a logical order for the strategies suggested?
- Is there a strategy that intensely impacts the issue(s)?
- What time and resources will be needed to take action on each idea?
- Toward what approaches do you feel people would be willing to invest time and energy?

Step 6

Develop a plan

(30-40 minutes)

Delineate the activities necessary to achieve each prioritized strategy. Be specific in describing the activities. Use the planning format to identify activities, timelines, and persons responsible for implementation. When choosing people responsible for implementation, identify only those individuals who are present. If someone not present is needed to successfully implement the plan, the action plan should delineate a strategy for involving that person in an effective manner. Consider how the evaluation approaches will demonstrate the effectiveness of each activity.

As you are engaged in the process of evaluating your efforts, don't forget to celebrate your successes! For those activities that were not successful, begin by examining the fidelity of implementation. Were the approaches implemented as intended? Perhaps the failure stems from poor implementation versus an ineffective strategy. At other times, new approaches may need to be developed.

Insert is Master Copy of Preferred Future Worksheet

An example of a completed Preferred Future Worksheet is provided on pages 5–8 to illustrate the process.

Preferred Future Worksheet

School Community _____ Date _____

Team Members _____

Step 1

Define concerns and envision a preferred future

Discuss your reasons for forming this group. What is currently happening? What do you want to have happen in the future? Develop a statement or statements summarizing the issues at hand, and describing your preferred future.

Current issues to be resolved—

Preferred future—

Step 2

Identify strengths and barriers

List strengths in the school community that can help you realize the preferred future identified in Step 1. Next, list the barriers in the school community that hinder movement toward the desired future.

Strengths—

Barriers—

Step 3

Brainstorm strategies

Solicit ideas for ways to achieve your vision of a preferred future. List all ideas on a flip chart or blackboard so they are visible to the group, as well as on the Preferred Future Worksheet. Do not allow members to evaluate any of the ideas. The time for evaluating ideas comes in the next step.

Ideas —

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Step 4

Select possible strategies

Use the checklist format provided on the worksheet to evaluate the ideas formulated in Step 3 and identify those you may want to pursue. Will this strategy help to achieve your preferred future? Is the idea realistic? Are there resources available to support the idea? Record your evaluations on the worksheet.

Idea #	Yes	No	Why
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Step 5

Prioritize strategies

Review the list of possible strategies. Prioritize and select initial strategies for implementation. Is there a logical order for the strategies suggested? Is there a strategy that intensely impacts the problem? What time and resources will be needed to act on each idea? Toward what approaches do you feel people would be willing to invest time and energy?

Step 6

Develop a plan

Delineate the activities necessary to achieve your priorities. Be specific in describing the activities. Use the planning format included to identify activities, timelines, persons responsible for implementation, and effective evaluation strategies. Consider how the evaluation approaches will demonstrate the effectiveness of each activity.

Priorities/Activities	Timeline	Person(s) Responsible	How to Evaluate	Accomplished (yes/no)

Published January, 1999. This publication was developed and supported by the *Together We're Better: Inclusive School Communities in Minnesota /Partnerships for Systems Change Program*, a collaborative program of the Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning and the Institute on Community Integration (UAP), College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota (Grant #H086J20010).

The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

This publication is available in alternative formats upon request. For additional copies or alternative formats contact—
Publications Office, Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Dr. SE. Minneapolis, MN 55455
(612) 624-4512, (612) 624-9344 (fax), *http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/ici/* (Web site)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Preferred Future Worksheet

Benjamin Franklin Elementary School — November 13, 1998

School Community — Date

special education teacher, 2 classroom teachers, school psychologist, counselor, cafeteria worker, parent

Team Members

Step 1

Define concerns and envision a preferred future

Discuss your reasons for forming this group. What is currently happening? What do you want to have happen in the future? Develop a statement or statements summarizing the issues at hand, and describing your preferred future.

Current issues to be resolved—

Adapting curriculum/instruction to meet the needs of all learners. The diversity among students (ability, culture) in the classroom is increasing. Teachers are concerned about meeting the needs of and ensuring success for all students.

Preferred future—

All students are successful in their learning environment. All teachers are capable of facilitating learning and growth for all students by implementing effective strategies, methods, and technology.

Step 2

Identify strengths and barriers

List strengths in the school community that can help you realize the preferred future identified in Step 1. Next, list the barriers in the school community that hinder movement toward the desired future.

Strengths—

There has been money allocated to the building for staff development. Some staff members are willing to make modifications and/or adaptations so that their students are successful. Staff are willing to gain new information or training on meeting the diverse learning needs in the classroom. There is a tremendous amount of teaching experience and talent within our staff.

Barriers—

Some teachers will not take responsibility for designing or making adaptations. Inexperience with adapting or modifying instruction for diverse learners. Sufficient time is not allotted during the school day to develop modifications.

Some staff believe that failing is a natural consequence and an effective method for correcting student performance; therefore, they don't see a need for adapting or modifying instruction.

Some teachers don't see a lot of flexibility in curriculum development because currently the curriculum is textbook/workbook driven.

Unwillingness of some staff to modify standards or expectations for individual learners.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Step 3

Brainstorm strategies

Solicit ideas for ways to achieve your vision of a preferred future. List all ideas on a flip chart or blackboard so they are visible to the group, as well as on the Preferred Future Worksheet. Do not allow members to evaluate any of the ideas. The time for evaluating ideas comes in the next step.

Ideas—

1. Provide training to teachers on individualizing instruction within the context of classroom activities for students with diverse learning needs.
2. Provide training opportunities for staff on learning styles and how instructions can be adapted to match the individual learning needs of each student.
3. Take time to meet with other teachers to share "what works" related to instructional or curriculum adaptation.
4. Ask the student or other students to help develop adaptations or support strategies for instruction.
5. Involve parents in brainstorming sessions to gain a better understanding of student interests, strengths, etc.
6. Consult with former teachers on successful approaches and methods.
7. "More heads are better than one." Work with other teachers in grade-level or content-area teams.
8. Visit other teachers' classrooms to gain new ideas.
9. Visit other schools, programs, etc., that are implementing unique approaches to teaching and learning.
10. Attend staff development activities (i.e. presentations, workshops, conferences) on meeting diverse needs in the classroom.
11. Gather resources (e.g. videotapes, journals, books) which address diversity in the classroom.
12. Take time to meet with other teachers to brainstorm ideas for individual learners.
13. Develop an informational packet of successful approaches used by teachers within our school.
14. Organize grade-level or subject-area teams to develop units that would be sensitive to a variety of different learners.
15. Organize monthly meetings where teachers can problem-solve around instructional issues for individual students.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Step 4

Select possible strategies

Use the checklist format provided on the worksheet to evaluate the ideas formulated in Step 3 and identify those you may want to pursue. Will this strategy help to achieve your preferred future? Is the idea realistic? Are there resources available to support the idea? Record your evaluations on the worksheet.

Idea #	Yes	No	Why
1.	X		May be a great way to use staff development funds.
2.	X		Great training opportunity. There are resources already available (teachers in our district and neighboring districts who are knowledgeable on this subject).
3.	X		This could be a great agenda item for monthly staff meetings.
4.	X		This is a good idea. Students have a very good perspective about what is working and what isn't.
5.		X	Parental input is a great resource, but scheduling planning/brainstorming sessions when parents can attend may be an issue for some parents.
6.	X		This should be a part of a transitional/planning process.
7.		X	Joint planning time is very limited.
8.		X	Good idea. There may be time restraints.
9.	X		Good idea. Staff development funds are available for school visitations.
10.	X		Great way to utilize our building staff development funds.
11.	X		A resource bank/library would be a great asset to the school.
12.		X	Great idea/time restraints.
13.	X		Great resource for teachers of specific strategies and for networking with others who adapt instruction effectively.
14.	X		Great idea. Could possibly use staff development funds.
15.	X		This could be a great way for teachers to learn from one another.

Step 5

Prioritize strategies

Review the list of possible strategies. Prioritize and select initial strategies for implementation. Is there a logical order for the strategies suggested? Is there a strategy that intensely impacts the problem? What time and resources will be needed to act on each idea? Toward what approaches do you feel people would be willing to invest time and energy?

1. Organize monthly meetings where teachers can problem-solve around instructional issues for individual students.

2. Two staff development opportunities will be provided which will attend to adapting/modifying instruction for diverse learners.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Step 6

Develop a plan

Delineate the activities necessary to achieve your priorities. Be specific in describing the activities. Use the planning format included to identify activities, timelines, persons responsible for implementation, and effective evaluation strategies. Consider how the evaluation approaches will demonstrate the effectiveness of each activity.

Priorities/Activities	Timeline	Person(s) Responsible	How to Evaluate	Accomplished (yes / no)
Organize monthly meetings where teachers can problem-solve around instructional issues for individual students.	12/15/98	Adaptation team	Monthly meetings are set on school calendar and advertised to staff.	
a. Identify co-facilitators and core members to attend each meeting.	12/3/98	Adaptation team	Core membership team is identified and agrees to attend meetings.	
b. Plan first meeting— • identify date and locations • organize agenda • advertise to staff	11/6/98	Joanne & Tom	Informational handout is developed and disseminated to all staff regarding first meeting.	
Provide two staff development opportunities that will attend to adapting/modifying instruction for diverse learners.	5/1/99	Adaptation team and staff development team.	Two staff development opportunities are held and attended by 75% of staff.	
a. Connect with the staff development team to discuss the need for this training and elicit their support.	11/15/98	Marci & Steve	Meeting is scheduled with the staff development team to begin planning.	
b. Coordinate planning efforts with the staff development team (e.g. content, presenters, date, location, materials).	11/15/99	Marci & Steve	Two staff development opportunities are scheduled and there is follow-through on planning efforts.	
c. Evaluate impact of training on teachers' willingness and ability to adapt instructional curriculum in order to meet diverse student needs.	pre/post the two workshops	Adaptation team and staff development team.	Pre/post survey results.	

Published January, 1999. This publication was developed and supported by the *Together We're Better: Inclusive School Communities in Minnesota (Partnerships for Systems Change Program)*, a collaborative program of the Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning and the Institute on Community Integration (UAP), College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota (Grant #H086J20010).

The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

This publication is available in alternative formats upon request. For additional copies or alternative formats contact—
Publications Office, Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 109 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Dr. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455
(612) 624-4512, (612) 624- 9344 (fax), *http://www.ici.coled.umn.edu/ici/* (Web site).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE